

# The 7Cs: A Comprehensive Approach to School Counseling

**Thomas V. Trotter, Ph.D.**

Gonzaga University & The  
University of Idaho

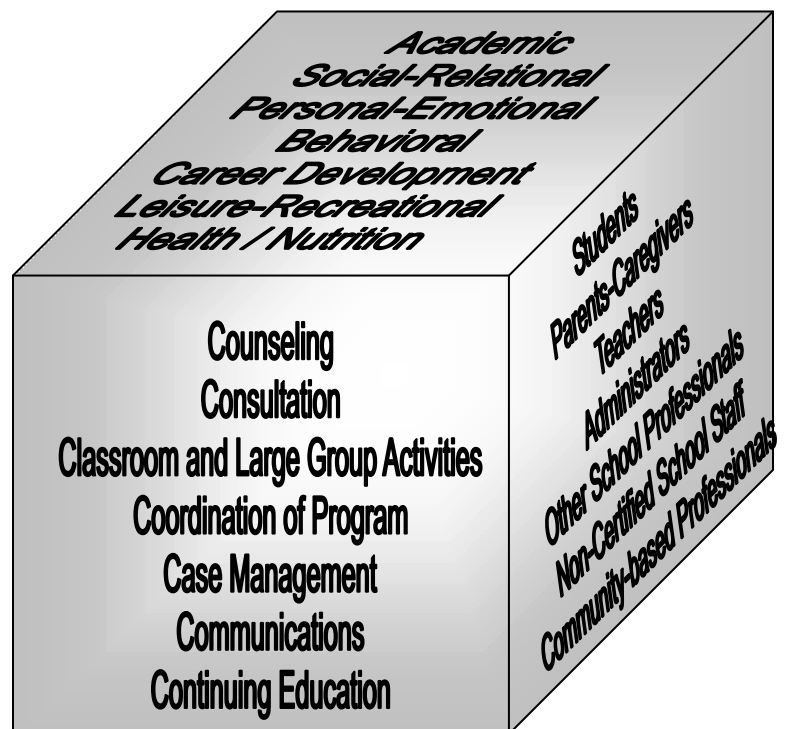
**Kathleen M. Trotter, Ed.S.**

Timberlake High School  
Timberlake, Idaho

**Chris McNaught, M.S.**

Wendell Elementary School &  
Wendell Middle School

<http://7cs-schoolcounselingmodel.com/>



# The 7Cs Model

T & K Trotter, 2009

## Introduction and Rationale

(See <http://7cs-schoolcounselingmodel.com/> for complete narrative with appendices.)

For many reasons, the time is right to consider updating established standards of professional practice in school counseling. What is needed is an approach that more accurately reflects best practice, is more easily understood, *and* is more responsive to the kinds of issues with which we are confronted in the schools today. The framework upon which the National and most state models are built is nearly 30 years old and replete with outdated and confusing terminology. It is suggested that the **7Cs** Model better represents how professional school counselors can meet the needs of children and youth.

The purpose of this guide is to provide a step-by-step approach for school counselors, administrators, and others who are either interested in or already in the process of developing or improving school counseling programs and services.

The organization to this guide is aligned with the change process through which essential pre-conditions for change are identified (Dougherty, 2005). These include (a) sufficient dissatisfaction with the status quo, (b) a vision of a preferred future, and (c) the creation of a pathway to achieving this vision. All of these pre-conditions must be met before meaningful systemic change can occur.

## A. Dissatisfaction with the Status Quo

This first step in the change process requires that school personnel responsible for program development and/or improvement determine how effective professional school counselors are in addressing the challenges students present these days. This can be easily demonstrated by simply comparing and contrasting student needs with school counselor job responsibilities. Using a format similar to the one below, itemize student needs/issues in the left-hand column. Next, list school counselor responsibilities in the right-hand column. Given that school counseling is a needs-based profession, how do these two lists compare? Where school counselor responsibilities are out of step with student needs, there is a basis for dissatisfaction in how school counselor roles and responsibilities are defined and carried out.

<b>Student Needs/Issues</b>	<b>School Counselor Responsibilities</b>
1. <i>Mental disorders: depression, anxiety, oppositional defiance, etc.</i>	1. <i>Test coordination</i>
2. <i>Behavior problems</i>	2. <i>Filling in for absent teachers</i>
3. <i>Relationship issues</i>	3. <i>Records management</i>
4. <i>Academic failure</i>	4. <i>Scheduling</i>

## B. Vision of a Preferred Future

The second step in the program development/improvement process calls for a vision of a preferred future; one that captures what the school counseling program *should* look like. The 7Cs Model is a three-dimensional approach to programming that consists of (1) delivery systems through which programs and services are provided, (2) areas of emphasis or the scope of our work with children and youth, and (3) partners with whom we collaborate in the delivery process. Each of these dimensions is described in more depth below and comprises the first three appendices to this guide.

### 1. Delivery Systems

The 7Cs delivery systems through which programs and services are provided include *counseling, consultation and collaboration, classroom and large group instruction, coordination of the school counseling program, case management, communications, and continuing education*. While these methods of delivery incorporate the traditional systems associated with the National and most state models, they more succinctly and accurately describe how school counselors function in terms that are much more easily understood, relevant, and in tune with the times. At the end of each description, percentages appear in parentheses. These percentages represent the norms or average amount of time school counselors spend in delivery. See **Appendix A**.

### 2. Scope – Areas of Emphasis

In recognition of contemporary student needs and issues, the **7Cs** Model builds on the original three ‘domains’ associated with the National Model (Academic, Career, Personal and Social). In this model, seven areas of emphasis are described, reflective of those contemporary issues that programs and services are designed to accommodate. In addition to academic, personal and social, and career development issues, this model recognizes that behavioral, health/nutritional, and recreational/leisure issues are relevant areas of concern also deserving of attention. Finally, given the explosion of mental disorders and relationship issues encountered in schools today, separating what has historically been combined into one term – ‘personal-social’ – seems appropriate given the frequency with which problems in these two domains are evident. In fact, recent input from the field suggests that most of the issues with which school counselors work cluster in one or both of these two domains, underscoring the importance of their independent status. See **Appendix B**.

### 3. Partners in the Process

Successfully addressing those presenting issues listed above necessitates that a partnership be forged between school counselors and many persons in the delivery process. In keeping with the popularized phrase, it 'takes a village to raise a child,' so too does it take many persons to effectively bring the many issues with which we contend to conclusion. Our many partners include the students themselves, their parents, teachers, and administrators; other school professionals and non-certified staff; and, community-based professionals outside the school system. See **Appendix C**.

### C. Pathway to Implementation

The third and final pre-condition for change is the creation of a pathway to implementation; determining how we can best realize the vision of our preferred future. The 7Cs Model utilizes a five-stage approach to implementation. These include (1) Conduct a SWOT analysis of program strengths, weaknesses (or challenges), opportunities, and threats; (2) Complete a study of school counselor time spent in each of the seven delivery systems and comparing actual time spent with established standards of practice or norms; (3) Having completed a time-and-task analysis, revisit the SWOT analysis, identifying over and under-expenditures of time as weaknesses and/or threats; (4) Itemize/prioritize weaknesses and threats, converting these aims (or strategic objectives) for program development/improvement; finally, (5) Develop action plans, with each one built around a specific strategic objective.

#### 1. Conduct a SWOT Analysis

The first and most fundamental step in the implementation process is to conduct an analysis of school counseling program Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, using the **7Cs** delivery systems as a frame of reference. Using the form enclosed as **Appendix D**, partner with other school counselors, administrators, advisory council members, and/or others in noting *Counseling* strengths and weaknesses. Moving down the left-hand side of this same form, note *Consultation and Collaboration* strengths and weaknesses. Next, move on to *Classroom Activities*, *Coordination of the Program*, *Case Management*, *Communications* and *Continuing Education* in turn, recording Strengths and Weaknesses specific to these delivery systems. These inputs will provide the foundation upon which the rest of the implementation process is built. It should be noted that Strengths and Weaknesses pertain to actual, "real time" resources and challenges, respectively; Opportunities and Threats refer to potential, not yet realized assets and liabilities.

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<b>Counseling</b>				
<b>Consultation and Collaboration</b>				
<b>Classroom Activities</b>				

<b>Coordination</b>				
<b>Case Management</b>				
<b>Communication</b>				
<b>Continuing Education</b>				

## 2. Complete a Time and Task Analysis

Using the *Time and Task Analysis* form enclosed as **Appendix E**, record the amount of time school counselors spend engaged in each of the 7Cs delivery systems. This can be accomplished on a weekly basis over an extended period of time by choosing to report time spent in each of the “Cs” on Monday of the first week, Tuesday of the next, Wednesday during the third week, and so forth. After five to six weeks of data-gathering, you should have enough representative information to determine the percentage of your total time spent in each of the seven delivery systems. Referring to the norms provided in **Appendix A**, determine the extent to which school counselor time either exceeds posted percentages or falls short of meeting expectations. Either of these outcomes constitutes a program weakness or potential threat and should be noted as such in revisiting the SWOT analysis completed earlier in Step No. 1.

Time Periods  Day of Week: _____	Counseling . Individual . Group . Crisis	Consultation & Collaboration .Diagnosis .Action Planning .Implementation of interventions .Evaluation of outcomes	Classroom/ Large Group Activities ."Guidance Curriculum" .Parent Education	Coordination of Program .Planning .Designing .Monitoring effectiveness .Evaluation of results	Case Mgt .Resource coordination .Advocacy .504, IEP, and Rtl planning	Communications / Public Relations .Newsletters .Website .Staff presentations	Continuing Education .Conference .Professional association .Journals .Consults .Coursework	Non-School Counseling .Registration .Scheduling .Bus duty .Records mgt. .Test Proctor
7:00-7:30								
7:30-8:00								
8:00-8:30								
8:30-9:00								
9:00-9:30								
10:00-10:30								
10:30-11:00								
11:00-11:30								
11:30-12:00								

An alternative, more comprehensive approach to completing the more traditional Time and Task Analysis can be found in the **7Cs Data Tracking System** (McNaught, 2008). This computer-based protocol can be used to record time spent in each of the three dimensions to the 7Cs Model – Delivery Systems, Areas of Emphasis (or domains), and our Partners. You can link to the *Tracking System* and user instructions from this website. This powerful monitoring tool has the added advantage of determining which issues (e.g. academic, personal-emotional, social-relational, etc.) are most prevalent in your caseload and with

which of our partners (e.g. students, teachers, administrators, etc.) we spend most of our time working on these same issues. This kind of data analysis has significant potential as a Communications tool with which descriptive program statistics can be shared with our partners, especially administrators.

### **3. Revisiting the SWOT Analysis**

Armed with information on how school counselor time tends to be spent across the 7Cs delivery systems, return to the SWOT analysis completed earlier. Where - according to established norms - excessive amounts of or insufficient time is spent engaged in any of the “Cs,” a weakness or threat is apparent. Update the SWOT, accordingly by noting which delivery systems are affected. For example, where insufficient time is dedicated to classroom (guidance) activities, record in the Weaknesses Column/Classroom Activities Row “Insufficient time spent engaged in classroom activities.”

If time permits, an even more thorough assessment of needs may also be conducted, the outcomes of which can be applied to further enhance the outcomes of the SWOT Analysis. Please note that there is a science to developing and conducting a more formal needs assessment structured around recognized standards in school counseling. The development of an expanded needs assessment is beyond the scope of this guide.

	<b><i>Strengths</i></b>	<b><i>Weaknesses</i></b>	<b><i>Opportunities</i></b>	<b><i>Threats</i></b>
<b><i>Counseling</i></b>				
<b><i>Consultation and Collaboration</i></b>				
<b><i>Classroom Activities</i></b>				
<b><i>Coordination</i></b>				
<b><i>Case Management</i></b>				
<b><i>Communication</i></b>				
<b><i>Continuing Education</i></b>				

### **4. Itemize Weaknesses and Threats – Convert to Strategic Objectives**

Reviewing reported Weaknesses and Threats, rank-order them in terms of which delivery system(s) seems to warrant the most attention in the development/ improvement process. The outcomes of a needs assessment, if conducted, can help in determining which of the **7Cs** should be the focus of attention.

Weaknesses and Threats can be easily converted to strategic objectives for action planning purposes with a little wordsmithing. For example, the Weakness cited above in Step 3 becomes “Increase time spent engaged in classroom guidance.”

<b><i>Delivery System</i></b>	<b><i>Weakness/Threat</i></b>	<b><i>Strategic Objective</i></b>

## 5. Develop Action Plans

Action plans are developed around each strategic objective, originally derived from Weaknesses and/or Threats. Referring to **Appendix F**, identify Strategies, Tactics, Persons Responsible, Resources, and Estimated Time of Accomplishment. It should be noted that strategies are drawn from reported Strengths and Opportunities in the SWOT Analysis.

Where recorded Strengths and Opportunities are insufficient to provide strategies needed to accomplish stated strategic objective, brainstorm response options that may be helpful in reaching this objective. Note that Tactics, Persons Responsible, Resources, and Estimated Time of Accomplishment (ETA) support each listed strategy, as illustrated below.

**Strategic Objective:** *Increase time spent engaged in classroom guidance.*

<b><i>Strategies</i></b>	<b><i>Tactics</i></b>	<b><i>Persons Responsible</i></b>	<b><i>Resources</i></b>	<b><i>ETA</i></b>
<i>Identify teachers willing to partner.</i>	<i>Approach teachers most open to collaboration.</i>	<i>School Counselor</i>	-	<i>During first three weeks of school.</i>

Movement toward program development/improvement is depends on gradual and deliberate implementation of each Action Plan, a Coordination of Program activity that typically involves many partners in the process.

## Summary

Further developing or improving local practices in school counseling is a worthwhile endeavor that will pay dividends in the end. Through these efforts, needs-based programs and services are affirmed or established, enabling us to focus our time and attention on the many critical issues that face us in the schools today.



# *The 7 Cs – Delivery*

## **System Definitions**

T & K Trotter, 2007

**Counseling** – That process through which the school counselor assists the counselee evaluate and define the presenting problem, explore response options, and make informed decisions regarding problem management. (\*22-36%)

**Consultation and Collaboration/Individual Appraisal** – That process through which the school counselor assists the consultee with a work-related problem with the goal of helping both the consultee and the client in some specific way. Steps in this process include entry level relationship-building/clarification of presenting problem, diagnosis/evaluation of selected variables, implementation and monitoring of intervention(s), and disengagement. (\*11-17%)

**Classroom/large group Instruction** – Presentations through which the school counselor imparts information or teaches new skills; usually structured as “classroom guidance” with students, educational programs for parents or caregivers, and/or inservice training for other professionals. (\*10-11%)

**Coordination of Program** – Activities undertaken to manage the school counseling program. These include contextual evaluation of needs to help with planning, input evaluation to help with structuring the program, process evaluation to help monitor progress and make needed changes, and product or outcomes evaluation to help determine the program’s overall effectiveness and identify which elements should be kept. (\*8-15%)

**Case Management/Advocacy** – A collaborative process through which counselors partner with other professionals in searching for/engaging in appropriate programs and services designed to assist students (or clients) and their families. (\*8-22%)

**Communications/Public Relations/Information** – Those activities through which the counselor regularly connects with school, family, and/or community partners for the purpose of providing/exchanging information about the program and or services provided. This function includes those activities designed to promote the school counseling program. (\*8-15%)

**Continuing Education/Professional Development** – A deliberate and planful process through which the helping professional develops a knowledge and/or skill set in response to a want or need. (\*3-5%)

\*Reflect field-based percentages of time spent in each delivery system.



# The 7Cs Model as Compared to the ASCA Model

Domains		7Cs Model						
		Academic	Career	Personal-Emotional	Social Relational	Behavioral	Leisure-Recreational	Health-Nutritional
ASCA	Academic	X						
	Career		X					
	Personal-Social			X	X	X	X	X

Delivery Systems		7Cs Model						
		Classroom	Case Management	Counseling	Consultation & Collaboration	Communication	Coordination of Program	Continuing Education
ASCA	School Guidance Curriculum	X						
	Individual Student Planning		X					
	Responsive Services		X	X	X			
	System Support					X	X	X